



THE COALITION FOR ASIAN AMERICAN CHILDREN AND FAMILIES

fact sheet

Snapshots of New York City: An Overview of Asian American Families

Despite the image of “successful” immigrants, a significant portion of the Asian American population is far from living the American dream. For many in New York City’s Asian American population, the problems of poverty, overcrowded housing, and limited English proficiency are very real. ❖ Nationally, the Asian American and Pacific Islander (AAPI) populations consists of at least 21 distinct Asian ethnic groups and over a dozen Pacific Island nations.¹ The community’s cultural and linguistic needs are often unmet, and sometimes unacknowledged, by health and human services providers.

AAPIs IN NEW YORK CITY

In a span of two decades from 1980-2000, the Asian American Pacific Islander population increased at least 231% from 239,338 to 792,477 (792,477 being the unadjusted number of AAPI of one race from 2000). The Asian American and Pacific Islander populations in New York City in 2000 totaled 9.9% of the city population.

When including those Asian Americans or Pacific Islanders in combination, meaning those who marked Asian or Pacific Islander and one or more other race categories, the AAPI population would increase to 888,307, which is 11.1% of NYC's population.² In 2000, the largest Asian ethnic group was the Chinese, followed by Indians, Koreans, Filipinos, Pakistanis, Japanese and Bangladeshis.³

NEW YORK’S AAPI NEIGHBORHOODS²

Nearly three-quarters of the New York City Asian population are concentrated in Queens and Brooklyn. Most live within nine community districts made up of mainly low- to middle-income communities with limited health care, child care and youth services.

FAMILY RESOURCES

Although Asian New Yorkers have relatively high median household income rates, this figure hides the reality of multiple wage earners living in the same households, each wage earner having a low individual income. A higher percent of adult Asians are in the workforce, more than any other group. Even so, 32.5% of Asian New Yorker households have annual incomes below the city’s average of \$35,000. When individual income for adults is considered, most Asian ethnic groups fall below the city median.³

In 1999, 51.8% of Asian American mothers who gave birth in New York City were on Medicaid, *see page 2 >*

NEW YORK CITY BY RACE/ETHNICITY, 2000

	TOTAL POPULATION	% OF CITY POPULATION
Asian & Pacific Islander	783,058	9.8%
White	2,801,267	35.0%
Black	1,962,154	24.5%
Multiracial Hispanic	1,991,744	24.9%
Other	76,096	1.0%
Multiracial Non-Hispanic	393,959	4.9%
AA or PI in combination	95,830	1.2%
NEW YORK CITY	8,008,278	100%

Data derived from analysis by the Asian American Federation Census Information Center (Federation CIC).
 • Non-Hispanic numbers were used for racial groups for the purpose of adding to 100%. Hispanic origin can be of any race.
 • If Hispanic AAPIs are included, the total AAPI population would increase to 792,477 equal to 9.9% of the city’s population.

* All U.S. Census Bureau information includes Asian American and Pacific Islander data. Other sources specify only Asian American data. ** In Census 2000, Asians and Pacific Islanders were separated into different race categories. For the purpose of comparing between 1990-2000, the numbers from these two groups have been collapsed here.

indicating low-income households.⁴

Nearly 20% of all Asian households in the city are overcrowded, defined as having more than one person per room. This is more than five times the number of white households and twice that of African American households. Foreign born Asians also pay the highest median rent.³

Although many would qualify and benefit greatly from it, Asian New Yorkers utilize public assistance far less than any other ethnic group

(only 7.2% of households as compared to the NYC average 19.2% of households).² This low use may reflect the inaccessibility of services rather than true need. Accessing services may be complicated by language barriers, lack of knowledge, and a cultural reluctance toward accepting public assistance. Also, many are not eligible to receive public assistance due to immigration status.

EDUCATION AND LINGUISTIC ISOLATION

Although a high percentage of Asians over 25 years of age have at least a college degree (36.1%), a disturbingly high number have not finished high school (23.9%).² Additionally, a college degree from another country often does not translate into occupational success, since limited fluency in English is a cause of significant underemployment of former professionals.

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WHERE ARE AAPIS LIVING? POPULATION BY BOROUGH

BOROUGH	1990	2000	1990-2000		2000	1990-2000		1990-2000
	AAPI Population	AA or PI Alone	AA or PI Alone Population Difference	% Increase	AA or PI In Combination	AA or PI Alone or in Combination Population Difference	% Increase	% Growth Range
Brooklyn	111,251	187,283	76,032	68.3%	211,371	100,120	90.0%	68.3%–90.0%
Queens	238,336	392,831	154,495	64.8%	437,353	199,017	83.5%	64.8%–83.5%
Manhattan	110,629	145,607	34,978	31.6%	159,082	48,453	43.8%	31.6%–43.8%
Bronx	35,562	41,503	5,941	16.7%	52,349	16,787	47.2%	16.7%–47.2%
Staten Island	16,941	25,253	8,312	49.1%	28,152	11,211	66.2%	49.1%–66.2%
NYC	512,719	792,477	279,758	54.6%	888,307	375,588	73.3%	54.6%–73.3%

* 2000 data is not adjusted for undercount.

** Percent growth is given as a minimum and maximum range due to changes in data collection in the 2000 Census; respondents were allowed to choose more than one race category.

Data derived from analysis by the Asian American Federation Census Information Center (Federation CIC).

Language also becomes a problem for children, as well. The 1990 Census found that in Queens, 33% of Asian American children aged 5 to 13 spoke only an Asian language

and were therefore linguistically isolated. Ninety-six percent of Asian American children in New York State live in households with foreign born parents.² A total of

45.7% of New York City Asian households in 1990 were deemed to be linguistically isolated which means that no one over 14 speaks English "very well." ❖

¹ *The Health Status of Asian Pacific Islander Americans in California*. The California Endowment and California HealthCare Foundation, April 1997

² U.S. Census Bureau, Census 2000, analyzed by the Asian American Federation Census Information Center, May 2001.

³ U.S. Census Bureau, Housing and Vacancy Survey, 1996 ⁴ NYC Department of Health Summary of Vital Statistics, 1998.

PRODUCED BY: The Coalition for Asian American Children and Families, 120 Wall Street, Third Floor, New York, NY 10005
Tel: 212-809-4675 Fax: 212-344-5636 Email: cacf@cafc.org Website: www.cacf.org

THE COALITION FOR ASIAN AMERICAN CHILDREN AND FAMILIES seeks to improve the quality of life for the New York City Asian American community by facilitating access to health and human services that are sensitive to all Asian American children and families.

OTHER FACT SHEETS IN THIS SERIES: ❖ Education and New York's Asian American Children ❖ Child and Family Health of New York's Asian American Community ❖ Understanding the Issues Around Child Abuse and Neglect and Asian American Children

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